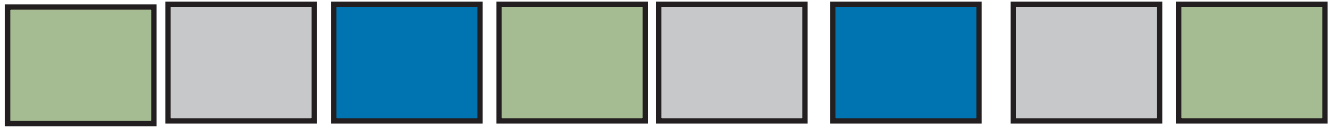


INSIDER

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Communicating Education Progress

One of the department's largest efforts to inform the public about education in Tennessee is the state report card. Constantly improving the report card while maintaining the accuracy of the data takes a lot of work within a limited window of time.

Corey Chatis, Janine Whited, John Beam, Nancy Stetten, Juanita Byerly, Emily Allen continually do an exceptional job on this project. Irma

Jones joined them this year and has assumed responsibility for data quality following Ms. Chatis's departure.

Assisting this group is team of data managers who supply information to support the report card content. The resulting product is a vital tool to parents, relocating families, educators and the public. Congratulations on turning a complex undertaking into another smooth rollout.

Going the Extra Mile for Your Wallet

We want to acknowledge and thank those who have assumed additional responsibility in making sure each department of education employee receives a pay-check for their work.

- Penny Griffith, Dean Moore and Brenda Pursely worked at least one entire weekend and many nights during the transition to online payroll system under Edison.

- Linda Hartbarger, Sarah Morgan and Tabatha Wilson are also department

superusers and have additional responsibilities in ensuring the accuracy and timeliness of payroll submissions.

- Deborah Boshears-Davis has led this team as the department liaison for the statewide Edison initiative.

- Outside "the Tower," the state special schools have done a good job of meeting stringent deadlines.

Thank you all for your efforts for the benefit of all department of education colleagues!

WINTER HOLIDAYS

Governor Bredesen has announced State offices will be closed Wednesday, Dec. 24 and Friday, Dec. 26 in addition to the official holiday on Thursday, Dec. 25 for Christmas. State offices will also be closed on Thursday, Jan. 1 in observance of New Year's Day.

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The Reason for the Season

CTE Division Brightens Holidays for Girls at Jamaican Orphanage



Sandra Brown with gift-wrapped packages of treats and necessities for residents of Windsor Girls' Home in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica.

Wouldn't many of us love to be in Jamaica as winter sets in in Nashville turning the weather outside cold and gray? But for 40 young Jamaican girls, the holidays might not be so bright were it not for the caring and generosity of the department's CTE division.

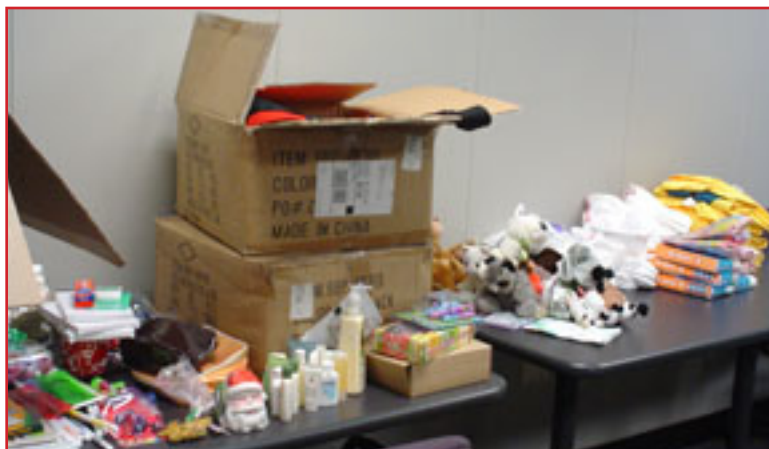
The Windsor Girls Home, an orphanage located in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica situated midway on the north coast, is home to girls aged 12 to 18 from abandoned, abused or neglected backgrounds. Colleagues in the CTE division collected donations to fill 48 boxes with items including backpacks, panties, school supplies, jewelry sets, bath and toiletry products, t-shirts, rubber shoes, hair supplies, small games, cosmetics and other items. Each box will be individually wrapped with a girl's name on it.

CTE's Sandra Brown first learned of Windsor Girls' Home at a seminar by the National Association of Christian Education. She instigated a campaign among the Nashville community to collect needed items for 56 girls living there at the time. MeHarry Medical College and St. Anselm's Episcopal Church donated medical and hygiene supplies. Mt. Sinai M.B. Church donated personal supplies and financial help. The African American Cultural Alliance donated school

Other Holiday Giving Campaigns:

* The Office of Teacher Licensing each holiday season collects donations for a local charity. This year, the recipient is the Nashville Rescue Mission and donations are being accepted through Dec. 15. Contact Sharon Walker at x24885.

supplies and Robert McLeod and Dr. Julius Garvey donated financial help. Brown and AACA CEO Kwame Leo Lillard delivered the donations in August. She was so touched by their appreciation that she initiated a holiday giving campaign among her colleagues in CTE. In an article distributed to coworkers, Brown encouraged them to think globally and remember that even a small group of thoughtful individuals can make a meaningful impact.





Governor Bredesen met with students representing nine schools across Tennessee participating in school-wide implementation of Project Citizen, a program that teaches students how to work through public policy groups to instigate community improvement. Pictured above: Stuart Elementary students, Cleveland City Schools

Familiar Faces, New Roles

- Bruce Opie is now the Assistant Commissioner of Legislation and Policy. He will continue representing the department to the General Assembly, as well as oversee the divisions of School Approval, Teacher Licensure and Professional Development

- Dr. Connie Smith is adding the divisions of Teaching and Learning and Federal Programs to her responsibilities in her new role as Assistant Commissioner for Accountability and Teaching and Learning. Gwen Watson is aiding her as Executive Director for Elementary Education and the Office of Achievement Gap Elimination.

- As Deputy Commissioner, Robert Greene continues his responsibility over the divisions of Local Finance, and School Safety and Learning Support while adding responsibility for the division of Assessment, Evaluation and Research. Angie Cannon is now in charge of special projects for the department and reports directly to the Deputy Commissioner.

- Becky Kent is now Executive Director of Teacher Recruitment and Support, overseeing alternative licensure programs including Teach Tennessee, Transition to Teaching and Troops to Teachers.

Helping Teachers Teach and Children Learn

December 2008

REPORTERS CALLING? CALL US!

As public servants, we have a duty to provide information to the public to the extent required by law. Fortunately, the department's communications division is dedicated to responding to public and media requests so you can focus on your primary role in the department. Of course, we need your help to do our job effectively!

Public Requests: We must respond to public requests for information within seven business days, under the revised Tennessee Public Records Act. Within this period, we must either provide access to the requested records, explain when the records will be ready, request more detail about the request, or deny the request.

Media Policy: The department's media policy serves to protect your time and prevent misinformation or mixed messages from being presented to the public. In brief, no one in the department should grant an interview or provide information without going through the communications division

first. Instead, explain to the reporter that media requests must go through the communications division and offer the contact information to reach Rachel Woods at (615) 253-1960 or Rachel.woods@state.tn.us. If you are approached at a conference or in a school, stick solely to the facts you know without a doubt are accurate and feel free ask the reporter to schedule an interview for any additional information needed.

Your News: Want to help spread good news? We want to hear about programs, initiatives, success stories and events that show off the hard work of the department, or the folks you work with in the field. We welcome photos, press release topics and story ideas for newsletters or to pitch to the media. Please keep us informed of the good work you do.

In summary...

**USE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS
STAFF.
WE ARE HERE FOR YOU.**

Rachel Woods
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(615) 253-1960
Rachel.Woods@state.tn.us

Amanda Anderson
Deputy Director of Communications
(615) 532-7817
Amanda.Anderson@state.tn.us

Katharine Mosher
Communications Specialist
(615) 532-3318
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Tell Your Story

Press releases, newsletters and story pitches are a few ways to get the word out to the public about the good things happening in the department of education. Here's what we need to know to help publicize your story.

- 1. Name and contact information for the person in charge*
- 2. Description of the news, grant program, initiative, award, event, etc. including a brief history, the purpose, event information and any details you think are vital to include*
- 3. If it's an ongoing program, is there anything new or that has changed we should be aware of?*

Important Tips to consider:

- Please allow ample lead time to get the announcement or article prepared. If you need a press release by a certain date, submit a request as early as possible. If you wait, other announcements will likely be in line ahead of yours.*
- What is newsworthy in your division? What do you think will be of interest to the public or fellow educators? There are great stories to be told; we want to know about them.*
- Is there anything sensitive or controversial related to the announcement? If so, we need to know up front.*

***** Send your press release requests or news items to Rachel Woods, Director of Communications, Rachel.Woods@state.tn.us or (615) 253-1960.**

Make the Web Site Yours!

One of the most effective ways to tell your story is by posting content to the department Web site on a regular basis. This does not mean the more cluttered page, the better. We are not maintaining the national archives but operating an agency tasked with providing easy-to-understand information about what happening in education in Tennessee NOW!

One easy gauge for a good Web page is whether a frequent visitor can tell that a program or division posts fresh, up-to-date information on a regular basis. Only to the most vital

information that users need all the time, or that is legally required, should be maintained on a permanent basis. Powerpoint from 2005? Update it, or chuck it. News story from 2007? News Flash: it ain't new anymore.

Starting yesterday, the content of the department's redesigned Web site is everyone employee's responsibility. You will receive regular tips on how to do your part and we welcome suggestions from you on ways to improve. Together, we'll make Tennessee's education Web site a to shining example of government transparency.